high rolling

pressun press

1. introduction

Examination of Public Domain Role-Playing Game concepts.

2. traits

Examples included in Public Domain Role-Playing Game are suggestions. Any trait can be used and any noun[1] can be represented by traits. Within the narrative, any trait can be rolled to prevent incapacitation when taking damage.

3. dice

With no inherent meaning, chance is a tool storytellers can wield to create meaning. Probability creates and predicts situations with real stakes. Arrays with higher averages generally roll higher than lower averages. Adding dice with lower maximums increase the average of an array while keeping a tight deviation. Dice with higher maximums increase deviation and variety of rolls. Mathematically, using many dice of lower maximums is superior to using few dice of higher maximums.

3.1. modifiers

Public Domain Role-Playing Game is balanced without formal modifiers. Both sides adding numbers to their rolls is unneeded arithmetic that adds nothing creatively. Being forced to consult a character sheet after rolling slows the game down. Dice themselves are informal modifiers since none can roll under a one.

3.2. arrays

Fifteen of forty-three provided dice combinations are possible with two sets of polyhedral dice. Players have access to arrays of higher means and deviations than the High Roller. A narrative description should accompany every die used.

[1] *Including:* groups, vehicles, and objects

4. conflict

Public Domain Role-Playing Game functions without formal turn order and initiative. Turn orders condemn everyone to playing a fraction of the time, produce performance anxiety, and frustrate impatient players. Every character should take one action[2] before anyone can take another. Those who roll highest in a conflict declare their next action before anyone else.

Anything non-trivial can be represented as a conflict and anything sensible can be used within a conflict. One d10 may be used per level of difficulty instead of a numerical threshold.

4.1. damage

Mortals can receive a maximum of forty damage whereas the most powerful thing conceivable has a maximum of sixteen-hundred.

A pool over forty may represent a group. Retreat, incapacitation, or a change in strategy may happen at set thresholds of damage.

Alternatively, something may have a dice pool and lose one die each time a conflict is lost.

Upon rolling a tie, the players and High Roller may decide for both parties to take damage instead of no change to the situation.

4.1.1. incapacitation

Incapacitated characters may be conscious but unable to act within a conflict. Stress, lack of will, and exhaustion may cause characters to be incapacitated. If a conflict is directed toward an incapacitated character they may utilize their traits, skills, and items but may not make an additional action except to roll against incapacitation. Other characters may use their action to aid an incapacitated character.

[2] Those that cannot contribute to a conflict or perform a non-conflict action may pass and concede their action

4.1.2. b r e a k a g e

An item breaking may inflict full damage to the wielder, inflict reduced damage based on item breakage roll, or no inflict no damage to the wielder. It is recommended to use the former rule to keep stakes high.

4.2. c o l l a b o r a t i o n

Creativity with traits and items allow characters to use more of them in conflict rolls. Players gamble damage to their characters and items equal to the maximum they can roll. Independent characters are vulnerable when losing conflicts since no damage is split. Inflicted damage can be transferred into wielded items instead of a character. Management of player resources is the core of all strategies.

Non-violent supporting actions contribute to total damage for facilitating situations that inflict damage.

By rolling in the open, those good at mental arithmetic can help others who are not since numbers are on the table and not in character sheets.

4.3. f a i l u r e

Success and failure do not need to be a binary. By setting a threshold, the High Roller sets a number for a "flawless" success. If a player rolls under threshold, the High Roller may offer that player to succeed in their action but also take damage equal to their roll.

4.4. c h a s e

Any trait, skill, or item may be used, if sensible. A single conflict may represent a chase or expanded into multiple conflicts. Instead of measurement, abstract distances of "close" to "distant" prioritize context over mechanics.

Chase Threshold may be done as a tug-of-war between the High Roller and players, each adding or subtracting to it.

Alternatively, High Roller and players may have separate Chase Thresholds and are trying to reach a target number.

5. p r o g r e s s i o n

Characters become more versatile with their traits, skills and items as they use them. As dice pools grow, characters may invest more of themselves in specific actions without needing to use multiple traits, skills and items.

5.1. n o t c h e s

Notches represent a character's experience within the world. Characters gain experience through surviving adversity. Spending notches represent a character's past experiences affecting future outcomes.

5.2. a r c h e t y p e s

Gain or spend notches in specific situations and actions. Archetypes can be used as traits in conflicts and leveled up. By encouraging particular types of actions, role-playing becomes mechanically beneficial.

6. i t e m s

Any object can be incorporated in Public Domain Role-Playing Game if the maximum of forty is respected. Spending notches earned on an item can be used as a mechanic for special abilities.

7. m o d u l e s

Above all, modules are shared without restriction on use, derivatives, and distribution.

7.1. d o w n t i m e

Downtime creates a map and information for a world that characters inhabit. Creating fictional worlds collaboratively relieves creative pressure off of the High Roller and distributes it. Playable characters, non-player characters, conflicts, and adventures all emerge from world generation with their histories and backstories known by the entire group. Character viewpoints may be shaped by rumors they believe to be true.

If Downtime is played at the same time as Public Domain Role-Playing Game, world generation and exploration become symbiotic. Downtime turns become any arbitrary amount of time instead of a single week. Whoever currently taking a turn in Downtime becomes High Roller in Public Domain Role-Playing Game. High Roller may use any existing non-player characters, scarcities, local information, rumors, and map locations to create conflicts for the other players. Players take on the role of any named characters. To no longer be High Roller, simply add something new to the world by taking a turn in Downtime. Downtime turns continue until a High Roller is inspired enough to create a conflict for the other players to deal with.

8. effects

Abilities and effects from traits, skills and items can affect various[3] things in the game. Powerful effects can require a high roll to be used.

8.1. chase threshold

Pushing, pulling, and teleportation can affect the chase threshold dramatically. Ways of creating impassible chase threshold prevent targets from getting closer.

8.2. restraint

An effect that restrains forces the target to reckon with the restrainer before doing anything else.

8.3. senses

Blinding, deafening or otherwise reducing a target's abilities can drastically change a conflict.

8.4. summons

Autonomous creatures, items or effects can aid without using a character's action.

8.5. regeneration

Dealing damage or forgoing it can allow a character to reduce their own damage.

8.6. control

Possibly tying in with a restrain, a character could also control another character as their own.

8.7. rest

Prevent, increase or decrease effectiveness of rest.

8.8. re-roll

A die or dice may be re-rolled in specific situations.

high roller's arrays		
array	mean	deviation
d20 d20	21	8.15
d20 d12 d8	21.5	7.10
d20 d12 d4 d4	22	6.90
d20 d10 d10	21.50	7.05
d20 d10 d6 d4	22	6.76
d20 d8 d8 d4	22	6.71
d20 d8 d6 d6	22	6.66
d20 d6 d6 d4 d4	22.50	6.45
d12 d12 d10 d6	22	5.92
d12 d10 d10 d8	22	5.80
d10 d10 d10 d10	22	5.74
d10 d10 d10 d6 d4	22.50	5.36
d10 d10 d8 d8 d4	22.50	5.32
d10 d8 d8 d6 d4 d4	23	4.92

player's arrays		
array	mean	deviation
d20 d20	21	8.15
d20 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4	23	6.28
d12 d12 d12 d4	23.50	5.98
d12 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4	24	4.55
d10 d10 d10 d10	22	5.74
d10 d6 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4	24	4.32
d8 d8 d8 d8 d8	22.50	5.12
d8 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4	24.50	3.91
d6 d6 d6 d6 d6 d6 d4	23.50	4.33
d6 d6 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4	24.50	3.82
d4 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4 d4	25	3.54

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[3] This is not an exhaustive list